



Minutes of Council Meeting held at West Midlands Bridge Club Wednesday 28 February 2007

Present:

Jon Downing (Chairman) (delayed and arrived for item 3), Darren Evetts (Secretary), Colin Lang (Vice-Chairman), Jane Hall, Myra Scott, John Robbins, Pip Whitehouse, John Pyner, Stephanie Galvin

The meeting opened with a tribute to Michael Allen. Michael was an exemplary player not only in skill but in table manner also. Michael had served on the committee in various capacities for many years and will be sorely missed. Roger Bryant and Margaret Armstrong wrote an obituary which was published in the EBU magazine and on the website – our thanks to them both.

1. Apologies

Hylde Townsend, Leslie Reece (Treasurer), Carolyn Fisher, Beryl Latham, Nanette McWhirter, Dodo Georgevic, Ann Bailey, Alan Pagett, John Birch

2. Minutes of last meeting (151106)

The minutes were agreed and signed.

3. Matters Arising

New Logo – Darren has investigated the use of the Bear and Ragged Staff and we can use it. A copy has been sent to John Robbins to forward to the EBU. Stationery and the Website have been updated. Agreed to adopt new logo.

Corwen – Entry fees were discussed in previous meeting and figures never agreed. The decline in entries for WCBA pairs makes it even more uneconomic to offer maximum places in Corwen. It was agreed that WCBA would subsidise entry to the Corwen as follows: 1st Place=100%, 2nd Place=75%, 3rd Place=50% and 4th Place=25% (Warwickshire were permitted four places based on its number of EBU delegates plus one).

4. Treasurer's Report – Leslie Reece (Written report submitted)

The results for the year to 31 March 2007 are now expected to turn out better than forecast. At the last AGM I had forecast a small deficit for the year, but we are on course for a surplus.

A high proportion of our costs are invoiced towards the end of the year and I have made estimates for this report based on the experience of previous years.

The extra income of £400 from the fifty pence subscription increase was expected, but the initial success of the new WPL Premier division helped restore the declining results of the IPs to the level of two years ago, a turnaround of some £350.

Next year's WCBA sub will be unchanged at £3.

An unexpected saving arose from the switch of one home county match to an away venue. The biggest saving (over £400) came from discontinuing the printed calendar.

Warwickshire Programmes – There were some concerns over the loss of the programme in its previous form but agreed the cost saving was substantial and copies were made available to clubs for those members who do not have Internet access.

5. EBU Shareholders Report – John Pyner

- It is intended that universal membership will be in place by 2010. Proposals to be given out at June meeting.
- EBU Survey – 4600 responses (18%). Data will be published when analysis is complete, but meanwhile it was noted that 96% of respondents complained of bad behaviour.
- EBU is continuing to investigate the possibility of exemption from Council Tax and VAT.
- There is a one-year extension to the announcing rule to allow time for players to fully adopt the new rules. Chairman of Law & Ethics Committee accepted there was criticism of announcements, and the matter would be kept under review.

EBU Delegates – our EBU delegates are now down to two – Jon Downing & John Pyner. We should have three and it was agreed that Colin Lang would take over from the late Mike Allen and Leslie Reece would take over from Jon Downing.

County MDAG (Membership Development Action Group) – John Carter is looking to form a group to look at Membership Development in Counties and we are invited to send two members to represent Warwickshire Myra Scott and Colin Lang volunteered and were duly nominated. A meeting has been convened for Thursday 8 March in Aylesbury. The initial objectives would be discussed and formalised at this first meeting. Response to this idea has been positive. General discussion took place and comments fed to our representatives to take to the meeting.

6. League Secretary's Report – Leslie Reece (Written report submitted)

Coventry have taken a clear lead in division 1 and are hot favourites to reclaim the title after a gap of several years.

The handicap has proceeded on time and Dennis Heighway is the first team into the semi-finals.

It is disappointing that the University team in division 4 has again not fulfilled its fixtures, although I had assurances at the beginning of the season. It would be a shame to bar them next year but I will have to do so unless I can get an absolutely firm declaration from them.

7. Tournament Secretary's Report – Pip Whitehouse

Garden Cities Heat (021206) – 5 teams competed with Coventry winning and Moseley A second.

GolfPrint (160107) – 7 teams competed with Edgbaston and Olton B qualifying for the regional final.

Charity Simultaneous Pairs – 8 clubs currently running heats (9 ran heats last year).

Warwickshire Pairs (040207) – 23 pairs competed with M Morriss & J Fenwick winners, M Parker & G Nodding second, C Potter & G Preece third and D Hulston & T Poole fourth.

Warwickshire Introductory Pairs (040207) – 16 pairs competed with N Lewis & S Donahoe winners and S Palmer & B Stevens second.

National Pairs Heat (270207) – 14 pairs competed with J Whittaker & J Hind winners and D Kenward & B Wood second – 5 pairs will qualify for the regional finals.

Warwickshire Pairs Final 040207 - In addition to a letter from Arden BC a number of verbal complaints were received regarding the cost of the event and the standard of food provided. A copy of the letter was sent to Moseley BC for their comments but to date we have not received any response. Leslie's report indicated that of the £12 table money charged only £6 of this went to the county a normal amount to cover 2 sessions room hire, TD and prize money.

Discussion took place about the Format of the Warwickshire Pairs in general and it was agreed that it was time to revamp the event. It was agreed to hold a one-day, two-session event with the Warwickshire Pairs Qualifying round in the afternoon and final in the evening, non-qualifiers would play in a consolation final. The Introductory pairs would be held as a single session event in the afternoon. In addition to these events we would hold a Newcomers Pairs for players below the Introductory pairs. Players in the latter two events would have the option to play in the evening if they wanted to. The consolation pairs would also be open to pairs in the evening.

8. Match/Selection Committee Report – John Robbins

Midlands Inter-Counties League - v Staffordshire Dawes 16-4, Porter 20-0 & Markham 14-6 v Oxfordshire Dawes 7-13, Porter 9-11, Markham 9-11.

Invitation Events – Beck Cup 15 April & Herefordshire Swiss Teams 12 May.

Hearty congratulations to Susan Stockdale and Dave Cropper on their selection for the recent Junior Camrose and for their subsequent win!

9. Secretary's Report – Darren Evetts

Correspondence:

Sutton BC – Mike Allen Condolences

Arden BC – Warwickshire Pairs Final Concerns

EBU – Best Behaviour Policy – Council agreed that we should support the Best Behaviour at Bridge policy. This policy lacks reference to practising active ethics, which is also important. We recommend our clubs also adopt and promote the policy, and make copies available to members.

EBU – Youth Bridge – Steve Byrne has indicated he wished to cease being the Youth Officer. There being no offers to fill this vacancy the matter was deferred.

Calendar Updates:

WMBC Opening week June 30 to July 8 2007

WPL Birmingham February session cancelled due to bad weather additional session on 28 June

National Pairs Heat added Tuesday 27 February @ WMBC

Foster Cups - Sunday 29 April @ Evesham Bridge Club 2pm

Stratford BC/WCBA Shakespeare 'No Fear' Swiss Teams – Saturday 29 July

WMBC - Greswolde Bowl - Sunday 15 April.

Website – New look site online – information sometimes difficult to come by - Goodman! Hits to date 17732 from May 2005.

Midland Counties Congress – Feedback generally positive regarding the new venue. Still awaiting confirmation of accounts. – Leslie Reece will be our fourth MCC representative.

10. Warwickshire Pairs League

The feedback from the first series was generally positive with the following points being the main areas in the Premier and Division I:

1. The majority like the basic format of the event.
2. There is a chaotic start to the evening (potentially leading to a late finish).
3. The assigned score for a missed session(s) is too generous.
4. We should play less boards/more pairs.

The feedback from Division II was again positive but it was noted that there was a disappointing entry in Coventry Division II. Feedback suggested that people were happy with the format of Division II in general. There was concern about Division II in Coventry being merged with Division I but there was little we could do with such a small entry – we would try to encourage more pairs to enter Coventry Division II.

The WPL Working Group decided that:

Substitute players/pairs is permitted and recommended. A pair not providing a substitute pair/player will be assigned 8VPs per match.

A pair failing to turn up to a session without prior notification (this includes an arranged substitute pair) without a valid reason (eg car accident where both players are held up etc) would be assigned 0VPs. – contact information is provided in the rules as below.

Substitution Rules

1. Any substitution may be made from a lower division.
2. A pair playing in a higher division may not make a substitution to a lower division. (ie a pair playing in the Premier may not substitute in Division I but individuals from the Premier may act as substitutes in non-regular partnerships).
3. No substitutes are permitted in Division II

Whilst there may still be an occasion where a pair does not arrive and a reassignment is necessary at least it will be the exception rather than the rule!

Entries would be required for the Premier and Division I one week before the first session of a series. Entries to Division II may be made up to, and including, the third session.

Late entries to the Premier or Division I will be accepted only if they were made as two pairs (our aim is an even number of tables) or a single pair would achieve our aim.

Number of boards – We discussed the number of boards played and the impact upon time. It was agreed that in the Premier we would play 2 x 14 board matches and Division I would play 2 x 12 board matches.

2006/7 Series 2 Entries to date:

Premier – 26 Pairs

Coventry Division I – 15 pairs entered compared with 17 last series

Coventry Division II – 3 pairs entered compared with 4 last series

Birmingham Division I – 26 pairs entered compared with 22 last series

Birmingham Division II – 20 pairs entered compared with 20 last series

It was noted that the rate we pay TDs should be reviewed in the Premier and Division I in light of the increased workload. Deferred again to the April meeting.

It was also noted that Coventry BC had not received an official request for them to host this current series. Darren apologised for this oversight and thanks Coventry for their understanding and support. The Premier would move back to WMBC in September 07 and remain until Coventry has moved to new premises. Once this move has taken place we would like to offer one series at WMBC and the other at CBC.

11. Newcomers Development Officer's Report – Myra Scott

Partner Teacher Scheme – The scheme offers significant help to teachers working alongside clubs, but they need ambitious numbers with playing groups of 28 after one year. It describes how teachers can set up their own clubs to affiliate to the EBU and counties. No mention is made of teachers who are working with existing clubs and I feel that they should also be eligible for some assistance.

There is no mention within the scheme of how it will support teachers with subsequent groups. I feel we should support the EBU in its aims to encourage teacher and students. I am attending the first course, an EBUTA member, and will report back.

12. Green Point Event – Sunday 13 May 2007 – Sutton Coldfield Bridge Club

Proceeding as expected.

13. AoB

14. Date of Next Meeting

Council - Wednesday 18 April 2007 @ 7.00pm – West Midlands Bridge Club. Coffee available upon arrival.

D Evetts
February 2007